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## Dec 14, 2012

### Calaveras California Asbestos Mine

**LIVE CHAT**d By **Pintas & Mullins Law Firm**

Calaveras Asbestos Ltd Mine and Mill is an abandoned mine in Copperopolis, California. The company began mining in 1950 and abandoned it around 1987, when federal and state regulators began cracking down on asbestos producers. Surprisingly, the most recent EPA documentation regarding asbestos in the area were authored in the early 1980s, before the mine was abandoned. These documents include area-resident health studies, and air, soil, and water sampling. In 1987, EPA proposed the open, abandoned mining pit for use as an active asbestos waste disposal site. Within Calaveras County alone there are fourteen former asbestos mines and naturally occurring asbestos locations. A map of these locales can be found [here](#).

In one of the EPA documents, it is affirmed that the Calveras area has a significant at-risk population. This is why the lack of current data and research regarding the area is surprising. [Asbestos exposure attorneys](#) warn the Calaveras-area residents that asbestos is an established carcinogen, and the fibers are able to suspend in air for long periods of time before settling. Once settled, asbestos fibers do not decompose in the environment

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The Calaveras Deposit is located throughout the western sections of Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties. Airborne background ambient levels taken upwind or remote from known sources were elevated. The ambient levels detected at upwind locations in the vicinity of a Calaveras mine/mill were at the extreme high end of the surveyed range. Airborne asbestos fibers are easily inhaled and able to permeate human lungs, causing debilitating and often fatal diseases such as asbestosis, mesothelioma, and lung cancer.

High volume sampler filters from the Calaveras Deposit area population centers have been located in the California Air Resources Board archives dating back to the early 1970s. This data was used to quantify airborne asbestos concentrations in the area in a 1982 EPA Project.

The project reviewed mortality and emissions data from 1968-1978 in order to design an epidemiological study to evaluate the influence of environmental asbestos exposure on mortality from lung cancer, mesothelioma, and cardiovascular disease. A questionnaire was developed for obtaining information from next-of-kin of descendants in the Calaveras area.

The study included nearly 1400 individuals. The purpose of the work was to design and implement an epidemiologic study protocol to further evaluate the hypothesis that asbestos related health effects have been observed among populations without occupational exposure.

Among these findings, EPA reported that eight water samples contained chrysotile concentrations above the detectable limit of approximately .04 fibers/liter. The highest concentration measured was approximately 20 fibers/liter. Measurements on water districts reservoirs located in western Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties showed higher than average asbestos concentrations for those with supplies passing through serpentine formations.

California was the leading asbestos-producing State before mining was banned in 2002. The state accounted for about 70 percent of domestic fiber production. The Calaveras mine in Calaveras, California, was the largest domestic producer prior to its closure in 1987.

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be elevated with respect to background.

The coincidence of asbestos mining and milling with such less-urbanized county areas is a favorable factor; people in more populous urban centers are exposed to a number of toxic substances in the ambient environment.

As previously mentioned, the report was released in 1982, and, since then there has not been any studies or data collected regarding the area. This is troubling because of the known long latency period between initial exposure to asbestos and development of related diseases. It can take anywhere from 15-40 years for symptoms to manifest. Thus the 1982 reports do not provide adequate or accurate cancer mortality information.

Lung cancer lawyers at Pintas & Mullins Law Firm urge Calaveras and Tuolumne residents to request current data from the EPA or state agencies. This is the only way residents will be able to obtain accurate information regarding the public health risk. Asbestos exposure is serious and can be life-threatening. If you suspect you were exposed, and developed a related illness, contact one of our nationally-respected asbestos exposure attorneys immediately for a free legal consultation.

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